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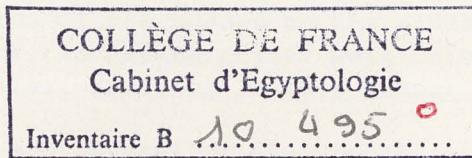
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REPORT ON THE WORK AT ABU SIMBEL

carried on by the "Centre de Documentation et d'Etudes sur l'Histoire de l'Art  
et de la Civilisation de l'ancienne Egypte"

This item has been contributed by Dr. Charles  
F. Nims, Epigraphic Survey, Oriental Institute,  
University of Chicago, Luxor

The first week after arrival at Abu Simbel was occupied by the work of organization and the photogrammetric survey. The latter was undertaken by a team of three French scholars, assisted by Drs. Mahmoud Tolba and Hasan Mostafa of the Faculty of Engineering, University of Cairo. In charge was Professor Poiuilliers, Directeur de l'Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures, a pioneer in all the applications of aerial survey. He served as chief of aerial observation for the AEF in 1916-1918. The first to apply the principles of aerial mapping to the study of architecture, it was his survey which was the basis of the photogrammetric section of the Report on the Monuments of Nubia (unfortunately without the mention of his name). By combining surveying and stereo (3-D) photography, he has been able to make very accurate measurements of buildings in the least possible time. From the results of the work at Abu Simbel a model of the temple and an architectural study are now being prepared in Paris.

Most of the staff members of the expedition at Abu Simbel have been drawn from the Department of Antiquities. There have been ten or more of these, including Mustafa Sobhy, in charge of the material administration, Abdel Karim Medhat, who has cleaned the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, the reliefs on the Osirid pillars in the first hall, and the Thoth Chapel, and who is now engaged in the renovation of the small temple, and Abdel Halim Helmi whose many drawings of Egyptian reliefs are well known. The appointment of a resident director awaits the ironing out of certain administrative details; those serving in this capacity have been Zaki Saad, Labib Habachi, and Shafik Farid. Many others, both at Abu Simbel and in Cairo, have served in some capacity in the organization and the work.

The non-Egyptian consultants are employed for only short periods to assist and advise in the recording. Professor Donadoni returned to Italy the latter part of February; Professor Cerný reached Abu Simbel shortly before his departure. He expects to remain until the end of this season, about April 1st. Dr. Nims returned to Luxor the first of February, leaving to carry on two exper-





perienced photographers. During January the photographic record included all of the scenes in the side rooms (Porter and Moss, I -- VIII), the Battle of Kadesh reliefs, and about two-thirds of the scenes on the sides and backs of the Osirid pillars. The photographs of the Kadesh relief were taken so that overlapping photographs give stereo relief, covering in this manner the entire wall.

Egypt's Vice President and several of the Council of Ministers visited the project the middle of February and are reported to be completely satisfied with the progress. Dr. and Mrs. Moustafa Amer left Luxor on March 1st to make a short visit to Abu Simbel. Mme. Desroches-Noblecourt, the UNESCO Counselor, has spent much time and energy in promotion of the work, and to her must go a considerable amount of the credit for its initial success.

The work will resume in the autumn, and by then the Department of Antiquities hopes to have begun work on the recording of other monuments in Nubia. The experience gained at Abu Simbel will be of great aid in this.

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#### THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART IN CAIRO

The following has been written by Mr. Karl Katz, a student of Islamic art and archaeology, who has had his training at Columbia University and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

It is this writer's privilege to be working, studying, and traveling in the Near East as a 1955-1956 Fellow of the American Schools of Oriental Research.

Most of my time prior to arriving in Egypt was spent in the field, excavating and exploring. Since I came to Cairo in the fall of 1955 the major part of my work has been done indoors, still busy exploring but not at all involved in excavating. All the objects on display at the Museum of Islamic Art are easily visible and accessible in excellent arrangements; consequently I have not been digging and burrowing my way through cases and piles of material, but happily have been exploring the rooms of this fine museum, and fortunately with great success.

The Museum of Islamic Art at Bab el Khalq Square (occupying the same building as the National Library) was known for half a century before 1952 as the Museum of Arab Art, and the recent change in its name indicates the recognition here of the larger scope of the art of Islam. In fact, this Museum offers the most comprehensive, extensive collection of Islamic art in the world. Of course, the material representing the arts of Islamic Egypt form the major part of the collection, but large groups of Persian and Turkish objects make this Museum's coverage of the art of Islam, from the earliest period to recent times, the finest of all places to study. Naturally working on this material in Cairo is the optimum situation where the tradition of the culture still lives on.

The first Islamic capital of Egypt, al-Fustāt, is not more than a twenty minute ride from midtown Cairo. Contiguous with this Umayyad site are the Tulunid and Fatimid cities of El Katai and El Kahira. The great buildings of the Mamluk Period are scattered all over the city. All these sites have yielded art treasures either through excavations or by preserving the great riches that adorned the mosques which are still used five times daily. The Museum is continuing excavations at the tremendous site of Fustāt, started in 1911, where many years ago the famous Tulunid stuccos and Fatimid frescoes were unearthed.



More and more heaps of Islamic ceramics of every known type are still being uncovered there, and wood, textiles, and glass are also being found. No end of its treasures is in sight, and the Museum has plans to conduct these excavations for a long time. The Museum also investigates all other Islamic sites in Egypt and just recently concluded a trial dig in Middle Egypt which exposed a cemetery with three levels.

Enriching the Museum through excavations is one method, and purchases and bequests are another. In the last ten years the Museum has had the great fortune of acquiring two very important collections. In 1945 it purchased the excellent Ralph Harari Collection which includes some of the finest Islamic bronzes. More recently, in 1949, the fine carpet, rug, and ceramic collection of the late Dr. Ali Ibrahim was purchased, increasing the Museum's holdings enormously.

In 1921 the first publication of the "Musée arabe" appeared. Eight years later the first volume of the Catalogue général du Musée arabe was published. Since that time until 1942 a large number of publications in Arabic and French, dealing with the Museum's collections and special exhibitions, regularly made their appearance. In 1953, after a long pause, the first volume of what is projected to be an extensive series was published. Volume One in the series Collections of the Museum of Islamic Art, it has the title Turkish Prayer Rugs and was written by the Museum's director, Dr. Mohamed Mostafa. It is a soft-covered 78-page booklet with twenty-two plates and a number of figures, written in a scholarly-popular style and produced both in English and Arabic. This past year another small booklet, made available in both English and Arabic, has appeared, the Short Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art. This is a very excellent and timely publication by Dr. Mostafa as the Museum has been thoroughly rearranged and Wiet's Guide Sommaire has long been out of print.

#### THE STAFF OF THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

Director	Dr. Mohamed Mostafa
Chief Curator	Mr. Ahmed Mamdouh Hamdi (Wood, Ivory, and Art of the Book)
Curator	Mrs. Waffia Ezzi (Textiles, Metalwork, Jewelry)
Assistant Curator	Mr. Abdel Rahman Fahmy (Numismatics, Carpets)
Assistant Curator	Mr. Sulaiman Ahmed Sulaiman (Stone and Stucco Work)
Assistant Curator	Mr. Abdel Raouf Ali Yussef (Ceramics)
Assistant in Archaeology	Mr. Abbas Abdel Wahab (Librarian; Glass)

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#### SIX WEEKS IN EGYPT

as reported by Miss Winifred Needler, Royal Ontario  
Museum of Archaeology, Toronto, Ont.

On being granted leave of absence from my museum last November for three months in the Near East, I intended to work for six weeks at Jericho and then to



proceed to Egypt. But Miss Kenyon's season of excavation was delayed for almost four weeks on account of the political situation in Jordan, and so the order was reversed. After waiting for twelve days in Damascus and another five in Jerusalem I flew on January 22 to Cairo, and the flight by way of the Dead Sea, Gulf of Aqaba, Sinai Peninsula, and Suez Canal was a fascinating reminder of some geographical facts important throughout Egyptian history. This change of program meant a slightly shortened stay in Egypt and lack of opportunity to plan an itinerary in advance. But Cairo and its immediate neighborhood are of supreme importance for my museum work, and many days at the ancient sites within reach of Cairo and constant study in the Egyptian Museum were rich compensation for inability to reach some of the less accessible places in the Nile Valley.

It was a shock to find on my arrival in Cairo that Mr. Bothmer had been injured in an accident, but from the hospital and later from his home he helped tremendously with travel arrangements and with advice concerning the intricacies of museum officialdom, supplying useful contacts and information. Dr. W. K. Simpson also kindly furnished assistance of the same sort. I was able to attend two of the Center's Sunday morning outings; one to the Islamic Museum and the other to the old wall of Cairo, both under the excellent guidance of Dr. Karl Katz.

At Saqqara I saw Professor Emery's excavation of the most recently discovered tomb in his First Dynasty cemetery as well as the furnishings removed from it, and I was also fortunate in having expert guidance at the Zoser Step Pyramid where Monsieur Lauer took me down to the blue-tiled chambers in the South Tomb to see the marvelous relief sculptures for the first time. And at Saqqara I had time to enjoy on my own many of the Dynasty V and VI mastabas. At Giza I examined the wood thus far removed from the boat grave at the Cheops Pyramid, the upper part of the pit in which the boat was buried and the roofing blocks, through the kindness of Mr. Zaki Noor. Dr. Fakhry allowed me to see the wonderful relief sculptures and statues from the Valley Temple at the Bent Pyramid at Dahshur, now all removed to a storeroom at Giza. And Professor Abubakr showed me the fine and remarkably well preserved Old Kingdom tombs recently excavated by the University of Alexandria, not to mention the interesting building in their midst, identified as a cage for hyenas. I went alone to Dahshur from Giza by taxi, a trip well worth the expense, not only for the site itself but for the lovely ten mile drive along the cultivation where the pyramids rise continuously behind the fields, gardens and villages, much as they were doubtless intended to be seen by their builders. I would recommend still more heartily the trip by donkey from Giza to Saqqara and back, for the way is more varied and one can visit the pyramids of Zawiet el Aryan and Abusir en route.

I had ten days in Upper Egypt, mostly at Luxor where I enjoyed the friendly hospitality of Chicago House. I crossed the river at 7:30 a.m. whenever possible with the Chicagoans working at Medinet Habu, and on the other side was dropped and picked up by their car wherever I wished on their way, thus being able to visit the private tombs with great ease. One day I climbed the ridge between the Deir el Bahari temples and the Valley of the Kings. Another day I saw Medinet Habu for the first time, under the guidance of Dr. Nims. From Chicago House I went by train for the day to Abydos, with Mrs. Helen Wall and Mr. Ed Wentz. We made a complete tour of the site, even climbing the cliffs above the wady cleft and visiting the Coptic church and village crowded inside their Early Dynastic wall. It was sad to see that the lovely house where Miss Calverley had lived for so long in the midst of the low desert (build by Garstang



at the close of the 19th century) has fallen completely into ruin since I had stayed with her there eight years ago.

From Luxor I went by train to Assuan for two nights only, a trip I could not resist although I had time there for only the briefest tour of the quarries, the rock-cut tombs, and the ancient site on Elephantine island.

After returning to Cairo from my stay in Upper Egypt I went for one more day to Abydos, this time to work only in the Sety temple. Through the efficiency of the Egyptian State Tourist Administration in Cairo, the trip going and returning on consecutive nights from Cairo was not too difficult. I was particularly fortunate because the train, due at 4:00 a.m., arrived at Baliana four hours late. I was transported from the railway station to the temple and back again and was accompanied by an official attendant from the time I arrived until I boarded the train at 10:30 p.m.

I am now looking forward to the weeks with the Jericho party, where I hope to gain some first-hand experience of the best archaeological techniques at a stratified site, an experience which should be of value in a general appraisal of archaeological work in the Nile Valley.

In closing I should like to say what a satisfaction it has been to return to Egypt with a good camera and color film, having once spent a much longer time there without them. Also, there is the incalculable benefit of having seen once more the living country, customs, and racial types that help to explain the ancient Egyptian arts and industries in my own museum.

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#### THE SUDAN AND THE HIGH DAM

Under the title Antiquities in the Northern Sudan, Dr. J. Vercoutter, Commissioner for Archaeology of the Sudan Government (P.O. Box 178, Khartoum, Sudan) issued on February 9 a preliminary report on the Sudanese monuments and sites likely to be submerged by the Sudd el Ali scheme. In this four-page mimeographed pamphlet the author outlines the peculiarities of Sudan archaeology and the extent of the work which will have to be done in order to save for posterity as many of the monuments and data which will forever become inaccessible once the High Dam has been built. He estimates that it will take a staff of 18 highly trained experts about six years to do the necessary field work, the staff to be composed of 10 archaeologists, 1 anthropologist, 1 architect, 1 restorer, 4 surveyors, 5 photographers and draftsmen. A budget outline, necessarily preliminary, indicates that the following funds will be required, exclusive of salaries and expenditures for motion picture recording:

Transfer and re-erection in Khartoum of the temples, or part of the temples, of Akasha, Buhen, Semna West and Semna East	L.E. 40,700
Excavation of the sites to be submerged and recording of the work	480,000
Material for field work and expendable supplies	57,200
Aerial photographic survey	6,500
Publication of the results	35,600
	<hr/>
	L.E. 620,000
	(\$1,800,000)

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THEBES-MARCH, 1956

Installations for the illumination of the Luxor Temple were completed early in the year and every night the entire length of the temple basks in light which is fortunately fairly pale, thus approximating the light of the full moon. Much clearance has been done on the north side, especially near the Nile avenue, and in the not too distant future the area on the northwest side of the Luxor Temple will be landscaped and then one will be able to enter the temple from that side. The little sanctuary of the Roman period, with the gateway inscribed by Hadrian, has been cleaned up and considerable excavation work is going on directly back of the Pylon on the north end of the outside of the wall of the First Court. Between the mosque and the Pylon some column capitals have been cleared and a portion of the upper part of the wall is now accessible. This work is being financed partly by the Antiquities Department, and partly by the municipality of Luxor from an allowance granted by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

At Karnak, Mr. Farid esh-Shabury, the energetic young architect of the Antiquities Department, has made much progress in the rebuilding of Pylon II, both towers of which have now risen to the height of the gate, and it is almost certain that the scaffolding will come down by the end of June. He has also probed under the base of the statue of Ramesses II on the south side of the gate and has brought several inscribed New Kingdom blocks to light. On the north side the colossus inscribed for the High Priest Pinodjem, but almost certainly made for Ramesses II originally, is being re-erected, and the Queen's statue has already been replaced on the insteps of the colossus (see NL XII, page 1).

The area north of the Sacred Lake has finally been cleared completely and is well leveled as far as the enclosure wall of the Amun Temple's eastern part. Work is now in progress along the east side of the Sacred Lake, and some of the mountains of rubble at the southeast corner have been carted away although it will take a major excavation to clear the terrain as far as the mudbrick outer enclosure wall on this side. The famous Kamose stela has now been completely solidified and, some weeks ago, was removed to the storeroom known as Sheikh Labib on the south side of the First Court. It has been framed and before the end of the year will be set up so that it can be seen by all visitors.

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#### CAIRO MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHS

Students of Egyptian archaeology and casual visitors alike frequently request, or would like to obtain, photographs of a piece of sculpture or for that matter of almost any object in the Cairo Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, and these notes may give an indication as to ways and means by which they can be procured. The ideal, of course, would be to find on file at a sales room a print of every available negative, neatly identified both by number of the object shown and of the particular view or views on hand, with a sufficient number of spare prints on file so that choosing the view desired and purchasing the appropriate prints (already labeled and numbered in pencil on the back) can be achieved in a few minutes.

Very few American and European museums, however, meet this standard; as a matter of fact it seems to become increasingly difficult as time goes on to obtain photographs from the great institutions which specialize in collecting works of art, - - - - - no doubt a result



of increased photographic activities without providing for an increase in administration at the same time. The Cairo Museum, fortunately, has had for many years its own photographic studio and has collected well over 20,000 negatives, mainly due to the fact that it not only had to take care of the day by day work which is common to all museums, but also was in charge of taking the photographs requested by scholars from all over the world who, without being members of the Museum's staff, were charged with producing the splendid volumes of the Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. It is too little known that for this undertaking, almost without exception, every single object to be published was photographed, regardless of any views taken at an earlier date which may have existed in the Museum's files, although eventually only a limited number of views appeared in the printed volumes. Furthermore, work on the projected volumes always began with having all objects to be dealt with photographed even though the text for some of them was never written or, if a manuscript was produced, it has, in some instances, never been published. Nevertheless, the negatives are still there and form a valuable guide to what is hidden in the cellar or stored away in the lower sections of desk cases.

The main collection of photographic negatives, however, consists of views which have been taken in the course of the routine work of the Museum and its predecessors at Giza and Bulaq during nearly 80 years. They appear to have been classified according to a system now lost; several of the old prints bear numbers on the back which cannot refer to the accession numbers of the objects shown, but must represent the file numbers of the negatives. This system is no longer known, and in the course of the years such a number of negatives seem to have accumulated that at some time in the late thirties a courageous curator of the Cairo Museum set out to classify all negatives then on hand according to a new system. He stated out by establishing ca. 50 subject headings, and numbering the negatives accordingly; the first number, before the hyphen, always giving the group to which the object shown had been assigned. He then proceeded to have a print made of every negative thus numbered and to have the print pasted in an album identified by the number of the respective group of objects. These Albums are invaluable as they not only give the negative number of the print shown, but also in many instances the Journal d'Entrée, Catalogue Général, and guidebook numbers by which the object can be identified, as well as the provenance. Thus, by choosing an example at random, one finds the photograph of the well-known statue of Hor-em-akhet, son of King Shabaqa, identified by its negative number 30-2/1 ("30" being the group number of standing statues), its Catalogue Général number (42204), its Journal d'Entrée number (38580) and the number (848) under which it can be found in Maspero's Guide of 1915 and which is still pasted to the base of the statue today. The Album classification is as follows:

Album 1 : Altars and offering tables

2 : Amulets, beads, scarabs

3 : Birds and other animals

4 : Coptic, Greek, and Roman sculpture

5 : Models of ships and boats

7 : Textiles

8 : Coffins and sarcophagi



- 9 : Mummies
- 10 : False doors
- 11 : Stone tools and implements
- 12 : Stone vases
- 14 : Pottery
- 15 : Objects from the tomb of Hetep-heres
- 16 : Jewelry
- 17 : Models of workmen and workshops; servant figures
- 18 : Pyramidia
- 20 : Views of the old Giza Museum, the Cairo Museum;  
gallery views
- 21 : Models of soldiers, weapons, etc.
- 22 : Ostraca
- 23A: Hieratic papyri
- 23B: Hieroglyphic, Demotic, and Aramaic papyri
- 24 : Reproductions of photographs, illustrations, drawings
- 25 : Greco-Roman mummy masks and portraits
- 26 : Reliefs and paintings
- 27 : Coptic and Greek papyri and other inscriptions
- 28 : Stelae
- 29 : Sphinxes and lions
- 30 : Standing and striding statues
- 31 : Seated statues
- 32 : Kneeling and squatting statues
- 33 : Block statues ("statues-cubes")
- 34 : Heads of statues
- 35 : Toilet objects
- 36 : Plants and flowers
- 37 : Objects from the tomb of Tutankhamen



- 38 : The statues of Rahotep and Nofret (early Dyn. IV)
- 39 : Palettes; the panels of Hesira (Dyn. III)
- 42 : House furniture and utensils
- 43 : Bronzes
- Album 44 : Obelisks
- 45 : Terracotta objects and figurines
- 46 : Greek and Roman statues
- 47 : Sculptor's models; unfinished statues
- 48 : Hunting and fishing scenes; unidentified objects

The ambitious undertaking of classifying all negatives did, however, remain unfinished and never caught up with the photography actually in progress. Several group numbers were left out and many objects, though photographed at one time, could not be found in the Museum so that their accession number remains unknown. Yet views of them can be purchased insofar as they are pasted into the Albums and are identified by a negative number. Meanwhile photography of objects in the Museum has continued, and at present the negatives are filed according to a rough classification under "Statues," "Inscriptions" and the like. Permission to consult the Albums in the studio of the Museum photographer can be obtained upon written application to the Director of the Museum to whom also requests for new views are to be addressed.

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#### CAIRO MEMBERSHIP

During the first three months of the year the Cairo group has continued to grow, and of the CENTER'S total membership well over 20 per cent are now residents of Egypt. In January Dr. William K. Simpson, Research Associate of the CENTER in Cairo, conducted three excursions on successive Sundays for visits to the unfinished pyramid at Abu Roash, to the Step Pyramid precinct at Saqqara, and the Second Pyramid complex at Giza. During February Islamic Egypt was on the program, and under the guidance of Mr. Karl Katz, a young Islamic scholar from New York, the members toured the Museum of Islamic Art and visited the Mosque of Ibn Touloun, the Gayer-Anderson Museum, the Bab el Futuh, and the walls of Cairo on several Sundays.

On March 4 forth members followed the invitation to a buffet supper extended by Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. Cremeans and, at their house in Meadi, discussed plans for a trip to Upper Egypt and viewed color slides taken by members on previous excursions. A group of about 12 participants met in Luxor on March 10 for an extended tour of the sites of ancient Thebes and also went to the Temple of Dendara, and a somewhat smaller group visited the temples of Edfu and Esna on the last day. A brief halt was made within sight of the walls of Hierakonpolis, on ancient fortress and royal residence which goes back to the beginning of Egyptian history.



On April 1 the regular Sunday excursions from Cairo were resumed with a trip to the rarely visited Sun Sanctuary of King Ne-user-ra of Dynasty V at Abu Gurab, near Abusir.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S REPORT DATED APRIL 6

Since the beginning of the year we have had a number of visitors who stopped in Egypt for archaeological work as well as for some professional sight-seeing. Miss Virginia Burton and Miss Joan Lines, both of the Metropolitan Museum, stayed until the middle of February before proceeding to points further east. Mr. Ray W. Smith, Chairman of the International Committee on Ancient Glass, spent a few days in Cairo and Alexandria during February, and at the end of the month Miss Winifred Needler, of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology, left for Jericho after a very fruitful six weeks on which she reports elsewhere in this Newsletter.

No decision has yet been made with regard to the new Museum of Egyptian Antiquities which, by necessity, is high up on the list of municipal improvements. There have been some plans to enlarge the present building by either an extension, or two new wings, on the north side so as to preserve the garden, the iron grills, and façade which look out over the Midan el Tahrir. But this would place the new exhibition galleries at the rear of the old building, and their approach constitutes quite a problem. Another plan has been proposed, namely to build the new Museum on the Mokattam Hill, above the El Azhar Mosque, where a new municipal development is under construction. As a matter of fact, there are unconfirmed reports that an Italian company has been commissioned to build a cable car connection between the Ezbekiah Garden and the new Cairo development on the Mokattam.

Between the present Museum and the Corniche, excavation work for the new City Hall has been completed and the construction of the basements is under way. Across the street from, and to the north of, the Antiquities Department, the new UNESCO Center is being built, adjoining the site of the Church of England to the east, and it is planned to move the Antiquities Department eventually to the block north of the UNESCO Center on the corner of Sharia el Gala.

Professor Emery's excavations at North Saqqara were again crowned with spectacular results on which we hope to bring a report in the next Newsletter. On the other hand, the Swiss-German dig at the Sun Sanctuary of King Weserkaf of Dynasty V brought little to light beyond the foundations, badly destroyed as they are, and the traces of an earlier building underneath. The University of Pennsylvania resumed its excavations at Mitrahine (Memphis) on February 4 and plans to continue through the month of June. The staff consists of Dr. Rudolf Anthes, Dr. Henry Fischer, Dr. William K. Simpson, Monsieur Jacquet from the Swiss Institute as architect, and two representatives of the Egyptian Antiquities Department one of whom is an Egyptologist, the other an architect.

On February 2 Mr. Michel Cassab, the Administrative Director of the Antiquities Department, died after a long illness. He is well remembered by scholars from many countries who found in him an ever helpful and understanding official whose courtesy and kindness were often a great comfort to harrassed visitors from abroad. Work at the Cheops Boat site is progressing slowly, and one piece of wood after another is being removed from the pit and treated in the laboratory erected on the site. Dr Zaki Iskander, Chief Chemist of the Cairo Museum, is in charge, ably assisted by Ahmed Youssef who is well known for his patient



restoration of the Hetep-heres furniture. In Alexandria the Fort Kom ed-Dik, next to the railroad station, is being torn down and the entire hill on which it stood will be removed as part of an extensive municipal improvement program. This will once more provide an opportunity of probing under the foundations of the Nabi Daniel Mosque for traces of the tomb of Alexander the Great, according to newspaper reports. Most scholars, however, take a dim view of such prospects.

In March we went to Upper Egypt once more, and after a few days at Luxor went to Assuan by jeep. Miss Thomas, in Newsletter XIII, page 5, provided very helpful directions, and thus only a few additional remarks may be needed. It has to be remembered that one must cross the canal on the last bridge to the left before reaching Esna. After traversing the railroad tracks and the village the road runs south, then east, and eventually for an alarmingly long stretch northeast before turning south and southwest on the way to Elkab. We crossed the Edfu-Red Sea macadam highway at 138 km. after leaving Luxor and went straight on since the track is slightly improved. Kom Ombo comes at 68 km. after the Edfu highway crossing. This stretch of road from Esna to Kom Ombo is rather lonely, and on the way down we met only two trucks, and no vehicles whatsoever on the way back. But we did encounter several herds of beautiful, nearly white camels which after a long march from the Sudan were being driven north to market by mounted Nubians, accompanied by a few Ababde bedouins who, however, prefer to walk on foot.

Kom Ombo is a company-owned town, and the tree-lined avenue which leads from the railroad station to the riverbank serves as roadbed for the sugarcane narrow-track railway whose rails are difficult to cross when one comes closer to the temple. This building of the Greco-Roman period, in perfect condition as far as it is preserved, lies close to the Nile, on the side of a high kom which is still unexcavated. The temple offers the rare example of highly modeled deep-cut sunk relief, in many places still covered with a thin layer of plaster on which the painted decoration was applied. Monsieur Gutbub, a French Egyptologist working on the publication of the temple, took time out to show us around before mounting again on the high, movable scaffolding by means of which he was drawing the inscriptions on the under side of the architraves. His presence at Kom Ombo, as well as the work done by Serge Sauneron at Esna, Jean Yoyotte at Deir el Medineh, Cl. Robichon at Karnak North, and J. -Ph. Lauer at Saqqara (to mention just a few of the French scholars who year after year are active in Egypt) reminds one of the emphasis a wise French government consistently puts on Egyptological scholarship as part of its cultural activities in the Nile valley.

After Kom Ombo the villages are Nubian in character and offer a much more pleasing aspect. The final stretch of road before reaching the narrow strip of fertile land below Assuan once more leads through the desert which here, with its rockfilled gorges, has a distinctly wild character.

At Assuan, by courtesy of the Antiquities Department, we were permitted to stay at its resthouse on the island of Elephantine, and every afternoon, after the day's work, swam in the Nile between the rocks of the lower cataract. The water is clear, in spite of the thick silt deposit on the bottom of the river, and swift-flowing, and it came as somewhat of a shock when we learned upon our return to Cairo that at the very spot where we had been swimming a six-foot crocodile was sighted basking in the sun by two eminently sober observers in the middle of January, on two successive afternoons. The greatest attraction at Assuan is formed by the fine painted reliefs and paintings of the late Old Kingdom, the First Intermediate Period, and the Middle Kingdom



in the tombs on the west bank, and since 1950, when I had last been there, Mr. Labib Habachi has excavated a new tomb, that of a certain Set-ka, on a level lower than that of tombs no. 25 to 36. Though the paintings are not too well preserved, they are most attractive and remind one of similar work of the First Intermediate Period in the rock-cut chambers of Ankh-tify and Sebekhotep at Mo'alla. Surprising is the gazelle frieze on the false door which, together with the paintings of Nubian mercenaries on the opposite wall, points out the distinctly local character of these tomb decorations.

The museum on the Island of Elephantine has now an annex, as yet unused, which provides excellent offices and exhibition galleries for a greatly enlarged museum. There is an open court on a lower level surrounded by a gallery which faces the court on three sides, quite a departure from conventional museum construction and ideally suited for the exhibition of sculpture in the round. The kom behind the museum is still a maze of stone constructions and mud-brick walls, but the family court of Heka-ib and Sa-renput has been fenced in and should, eventually, become a great attraction as a unique sanctuary, with statues and stelae and naoi still in place.

Driving time from Assuan to Luxor in the jeep came to nearly eight hours, but we were five in the car and had a great deal of baggage, including some outsize Nubian baskets which can be found only in the market at Assuan. On the trip back to Cairo we followed the usual route, staying on the east bank all the way to Assiout and only then crossing over to the west bank. Part of the road between Assuan and Kom Ombo was under construction and is greatly enlarged; road signs are still rather scarce, and the difficult stretch between Kom Ombo and Esna is entirely unmarked. On the other hand, there were some new road signs between Luxor and Assiout giving distances to the nearest town although intersections and road forks have thus far been left without markers.

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